

JACC Mail-in Newspaper Contest

ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS & JUDGING CRITERIA

CONTESTS and CLASSIFICATIONS

Publication -- General Excellence

Writing -- News Story, Enterprise News Story/Series, Feature Story, Profile Feature Story, Editorial, Critical Review, Opinion Story, Column Writing, Sports Game Story

Art/Design -- Editorial Cartoon, Inside Page Layout, Front Page Layout, Informational Graphic, Illustration, Student Designed Advertisement, Photo Illustration

Photography -- News Photo, Sports Action Photo, Feature Photo, Sports Feature Photo, Photo Story/Essay

ENTRIES

Materials published in student publications during the calendar year prior to the annual convention are eligible in that competition. Materials produced in the school year prior to the regional conferences are eligible in those competitions.

Unless otherwise indicated, each college will be allowed a maximum of **two entries per contest**. Exceptions are Newspaper General Excellence and Front Page Layout where only one entry is allowed per publication.

If an entry has been prepared by more than three individuals, it should be listed on the electronic entry form as prepared by the publication staff.

Entries will be prepared using one of three approaches, depending on the category:

- **Clippings:** A clipping is an original story, photo or piece of art neatly cut out of a print publication and affixed with rubber cement to an 8.5- by 11-inch sheet of paper.
- **Tear sheets:** A tear sheet is an entire page of a print publication
- **Printouts:** A printout is a physical copy of an online publication page from a black and white or color printer.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Students may compete in JACC contests as many times as they want while they are students at JACC member schools.

However, once they win a first- through fourth-place or a meritorious award — whether at a statewide convention or a regional conference, mail-in or on-the-spot/bring-in — they may

compete in that class of contests for only the next two years. The clock for this **two-year rule** starts ticking with the first meritorious or place win in a category and runs through the next equivalent convention/conference in two years.

JACC recognizes four classes of categories for the purposes of student eligibility:

- Writing/Editing
- Photography
- Design
- Broadcast/New Media

Students who become ineligible in one class of contest categories may continue to compete in other classes as long as they are eligible in those classes. See the JACC web site for a list of past winners no longer eligible to participation in each class.

MERITORIOUS AWARDS

Only "Meritorious" awards will be awarded in contests that generate 10 percent or less capacity (i.e., if 50 schools participate capacity is 100 — 50×2). If 10 or fewer entries are received, no first-through-fourth award or honorable mention awards will be made, only meritorious awards at the discretion of the judges.

Meritorious awards will also be awarded during the first two years of an experimental category. In addition, the JACC Board of Directors can approve permanent distribution of meritorious awards as it has done in the case of the newspaper enterprise category.

AWARD POINTS and the PACESETTER

The Pacesetter Award is a sweepstakes award to honor the top four schools in mail-in and on-the-spot competition at the annual convention. Schools must win a newspaper general excellence or online general excellence award to qualify. Qualifying schools receive sweepstakes awards for newspaper mail-in competitions, bring-in competitions and on-the-spot competitions. Magazine competitions and many broadcast/new media competitions are not included. Schools receive points for each eligible award they win:

unranked general excellence = 5 points
unranked meritorious – 3 points

first place = 5 points
second place = 4 points
third place = 3 points
fourth place = 2 points
honorable mention = 1 point

NEWSPAPER GENERAL EXCELLENCE (AA1)

Definition: THREE CONSECUTIVE issues, which may overlap semesters or academic years within the eligibility period. Newspapers entering this category must be published at least 8 times during the school year. Issues submitted should be typical and include none published for public relations purposes. Use of color WILL NOT be a factor in judging.

Class: Publication

Divisions: None. Tabloid and broadsheet publications are judged against the GE criteria, not each other.

Entries: One per college. Arrange and staple, in the top left corner, three complete issues in chronological (oldest-on-top) order. Place entry labels in the top right corner of each issue indicating 1 of 3, 2 of 3, and 3 of 3.

Judging: Criteria for judging are adapted from the rating book of the Associated Collegiate Press and will evaluate excellence in:

- a) Coverage and Content — scope of sources, balance of content, timeliness, vitality of content, sports coverage
- b) Writing and Editing — news stories, depth and feature stories, sports stories, copy editing, proofreading, headline writing and presentation
- c) Opinion Content — range of opinion content, editorial writing, editorial cartoons, opinion feature writing, forum
- d) Design — front page, news, feature and sports pages, opinion page or section, headline schedule, body typography, printing quality
- e) Advertising (for bonus points)
- f) Photography, Art and Graphics — photo content, photo quality, cutlines, art and graphics

Awards: Winning entries will be unranked. All entries meeting detailed criteria will earn general excellence awards. Only newspaper and online general excellence winner schools are eligible for Pacesetter Awards competition at the state convention.

FYI: See accompanying newspaper GE judging checklist (following all criteria)

NEWS STORY (NA1 and NA2)

Definition: An article that presents new information. The subject/source may either be on-campus or off-campus. If the news source is off-campus, the story must affect members of the college community in their on-campus roles and/or their off-campus roles as citizens and present new and timely information. May include a sports news story other than a game story. Open to work published in print or online.

Class: Writing

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Remove or obliterate headlines; okay to leave bylines. Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include use of multiple appropriate news sources, appropriateness and significance of topic, power and succinctness of lead, accuracy, completeness, conciseness, factual support, fairness, use of appropriate sources, grammar, use of new and timely information, and writing style.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

ENTERPRISE NEWS STORY/SERIES (NB1 and NB2)

Definition: A news article or series of articles that displays in-depth or investigative reporting. Entry may be issue-oriented, may be on-campus or off-campus and may be sports related. Series are not required to appear in consecutive issues and do not have to be labeled as a series.

Class: Writing

Entries: Two per college. Tear sheets or online printouts. Cross out textual and graphic elements on the page that are not related to the entry. Place entry label in top right corner of tear sheet. Arrange and staple series in chronological (oldest/first-on-top) order. Mark each page of the entry with a descriptive slug word and a page indicator --TOPIC: Pg 1 of 2, TOPIC: 1st of a series, etc.-- so that judges can clearly identify the work as one entry. Open to work published in print or online.

Judging: Criteria for judging include use of multiple appropriate sources, appropriateness and significance of topic, enterprise in reporting, depth of reporting, factual support, accuracy, completeness, conciseness, fairness, grammar, use of new and timely information, and writing style.

Awards: Meritorious at judges' discretion.

FEATURE STORY (ND1 and ND2)

Definition: An article that provides information supplementing a news or sports story, usually by adding the human element behind a news event or giving background through interpretation or explanation. The entry should be issue, trend, or activity oriented and be of interest to the campus community. The entry does not require a news peg, though it may occur. Profile articles may not be entered in this category. May include a sports feature. Open to work published in print or online.

Class: Writing

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Remove or obliterate headlines; okay to leave bylines. Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include use of multiple appropriate sources, appropriateness and significance of topic as well a appeal of lead, originality, clarity, accuracy, grammar and writing style.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

PROFILE FEATURE STORY (NE1 and NE2)

Definition: A personality sketch of an individual or group of interest to the campus community. The entry does not require a news peg, though it may occur. May include a sports profile feature. Open to work published in print or online.

Class: Writing

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Remove or obliterate headlines; okay to leave bylines. Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include multiple appropriate sources, appropriateness and significance of subject, human interest, appeal of lead, originality, clarity, accuracy, grammar and writing style.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

EDITORIAL (NF1 and NF2)

Definition: An editorial written as a statement of opinion by, or representing, the staff — not a personal opinion column. The subject/source/topic may either be on-campus or off-campus. If the subject/source/topic is off campus, the editorial must affect members of the college community in their on-campus roles and/or their off-campus roles as citizens. Open to work published in print or online.

Class: Writing

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Remove or obliterate headlines. Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include significance of topic to a campus audience, and purpose, logic, clarity, accuracy, factual support and documentation, organization, conciseness, fairness, persuasiveness of presentation, grammar and writing style.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

CRITICAL REVIEW (NG1 and NG2)

Definition: A review of the arts, architecture, food, technology, ideas or other creative works of interest to the campus community. Open to work published in print or online.

Class: Writing

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Remove or obliterate headlines; okay to leave bylines. Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include understanding of the medium, judgment and taste in evaluating, candor and power in evaluating, strength of lead, rationality of development, persuasiveness of presentation, grammar and writing style.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

OPINION STORY (NH1 and NH2)

Definition: A single story, which may be either a personal opinion, analysis, or other non-editorial opinion story. May include a column. May include humor. May include a sports opinion story or column. Does not require a news peg, though it may occur. An opinion piece entered in this competition may not be included in the Column Writing competition. Open to work published in print or online.

Class: Writing

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Remove or obliterate headlines; okay to leave bylines. Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include significance of topic and purpose, logic, clarity, accuracy, factual support and documentation, organization, conciseness, fairness, persuasiveness of presentation, grammar and writing style.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

COLUMN WRITING (NK1 and NK2)

Definition: An entry consists of TWO opinion stories, other than editorials, written by a single author or single writing team over the eligibility period. Work will be judged on the writer's ability to comment on, and/or provide insight into, a variety of topics. May include humor and sports columns. An opinion piece entered in this competition may not be included in the Opinion Story competition. Open to work published in print or online.

Class: Writing

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Remove or obliterate headlines; okay to leave bylines. Arrange and staple the two columns in any order. Mark each page of the entry with the author's last name and a page indicator — AUTHOR: Pg 1 of 2, AUTHOR: 1st of 2 stories, etc. — so that judges can clearly identify the work as one entry.

Judging: Criteria for judging include clarity of writing, sophistication of thought and appropriateness to campus audience. May include humor.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

SPORTS GAME STORY (NP1 and NP2)

Definition: A news story written about a sports event or anything newsworthy that takes place on the field of play during a sports event. Does not include a sports feature or sports column. Sports opinion stories may be entered in the opinion story category; sports columns may be entered into the column writing category; sports features may be entered into the feature story category; and sports profiles may be entered into the profile feature story category. Non-game sports news stories should be entered in the news story category. Open to work published in print or online.

Class: Writing

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Remove or obliterate headlines; okay to leave bylines. Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include use of multiple appropriate sources, avoidance of clichés, as well as appropriateness and significance of topic, power and succinctness of lead, accuracy, completeness, conciseness, factual support, fairness, use of appropriate sources, grammar and writing style.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

EDITORIAL CARTOON (GA1 and GA2)

Definition: A cartoon drawn as a statement of opinion by an editorial cartoonist. The subject/source/topic may either be on-campus or off-campus. If the subject/source/topic is off-campus, the editorial cartoon must affect members of the college community in their on-campus roles and/or their off-campus roles as citizens. May include a comic strip if it lends itself to a statement of opinion. Use of copyrighted images in appropriate fair use manners is acceptable.

Class: Art/Design

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include aptness, originality, clarity of message, technical/artistic merit, power and persuasiveness in communicating the editorial point of view.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

FRONT PAGE LAYOUT (GB1 and GC1)

Definition: ANY THREE complete front pages. Pages do not need to be from consecutive issues.

Class: Art/Design

Division: Entries will be judged in one of two divisions: Broadsheet (GB1) and Tabloid (GC1). The Page Layout contest is one contest and colleges may enter only one division.

Entry: One per college. Tear sheets. Arrange and staple the three tear sheets in chronological (first-to-last) order. The school's one entry may be submitted as prepared by the staff, or with the names of the individuals responsible for the page designs. Entries with more than three names should be submitted as prepared by the publication staff.

Judging: Criteria for judging include news judgment, use of headlines, use of photos and graphic elements, technical quality and content.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

INSIDE PAGE LAYOUT (GD1 and GD2; GF1 and GF2)

Definition: Any single inside newspaper page or double truck layout from any section of the newspaper other than Page One. Page may be open or contain advertising. Entry MAY NOT be primarily a photo story-essay layout.

Clarification: A photo essay is defined as a grouping of three or more photos that visually tell a story and/or make a point without the help of an accompanying story.

Any text block that runs with a photo story should be no more than 250 words.

Page designs composed of a written story, as opposed to a text block, and accompanied by multiple photos may be entered in this category.

Class: Art/Design

Divisions: Entries will be judged in one of two divisions: Broadsheet (GD1 and GD2) and Tabloid (GF1 and GF2). The Inside Page Layout contest is one contest and colleges may enter only one division.

Entries: Two per college. Tear sheets. Place entry label in top right corner of tear sheet.

Judging: Criteria for judging include effective mix of type, headlines, photos/illustrations and ads where used.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC (GG1 and GG2)

Definition: Charted information, graphs, diagrams or maps using illustration or photography. May be a stand-alone informational graphic.

Class: Art/Design

Entries: Two per college. Tear sheets. Submit entire tear sheet(s) on which the informational graphic and its accompanying story appear. Cross out textual and graphic elements on the page that are not part of the entry. Place entry label in top right corner of tear sheet.

Judging: Criteria for judging include visual appeal, clarity, accessibility and appropriate sourcing of information presented, and originality of concept. Use of color WILL NOT be a factor in judging.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

ILLUSTRATION (GH1 and GH2)

Definition: Artwork used in lieu of photographs, with intent to enhance any news, feature, sports or opinion article. May not include an informational graphic, photo illustration or editorial cartoon.

Class: Art/Design

Entries: Two per college. Tear sheets. Submit entire tear sheet on which the illustration appears. Double-truck pages may be submitted as one entry. Cross out textual and graphic elements on the page that are not part of the entry. Place entry label in top right corner of tear sheet.

Judging: Criteria are clarity of illustration in terms of related material it is designed to enhance, aptness, originality, technical/artistic merit and effectiveness in communicating the intended message. Use of color WILL NOT be a factor in judging.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

STUDENT DESIGNED ADVERTISEMENT (GK1 and GK2)

Definition: Student-designed advertisement originally published during the eligibility period.

Class: Art/Design

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings or online printouts. Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include persuasion of message, use of typography, use of graphics, clarity, aptness and originality. Use of color WILL NOT be a factor in judging.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION (PE1 and PE2)

Please note: this contest has been moved from the photo to the art/design classification. For the state convention mail-in it will be recoded GM to reflect that change. Use PE for the 2009 regional mail-in.

Definition: A contrived photographic illustration (not an informational graphic) that depicts a concept. It can be assembled either electronically or with traditional darkroom techniques and can include montage, double exposure, and other techniques to manipulate the image. May be a set-up or arranged photo and use costumes and props.

Class: Art/Design

Entries: Two per college. Tear sheets. Submit the entire tear sheet on which photo illustration appears. Neatly cross out elements on the page that are not part of the entry. Place entry label in top right corner of tear sheet.

Judging: Criteria for judging include originality of concept, effectiveness, impact and sophistication of manipulated images.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

NEWS PHOTO (PB1 and PB2)

Definition: A photo of a newsworthy event or activity over which the photographer had little or no control of setting, lighting or photographic opportunity. The photo should capture the most important aspect of the story, photograph objects, occurrences and events without setup, capture "the moment," and tell a story visually — incorporating as many of the 5Ws as possible. Set-up photos may not be entered.

Class: Photo

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings. Entry consists of clipping of photo as it actually ran, along with cutline/caption. *Failure to include the cutlines/captions will result in disqualification.* Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include newsworthiness as well as visual impact, story-telling ability, content/composition and technical quality. Photos must have good technical quality and should have interesting lighting, compelling content or use of creative techniques. Color photos may be entered, but color WILL NOT be a factor in judging.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

SPORTS FEATURE PHOTO (PC1 and PC2)

Definition: A sports photo that provides information supplementing a sports story, usually by adding the human element behind a news event or giving background through interpretation or explanation. The photographer may have some control of the setting in which the photo is taken, but the photo may not be set up, unless it's a portrait. The entry should be issue, trend or activity oriented and be of interest to the campus community. A sports photo of post-game or sideline action may be included in this category.

Class: Photo

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings. Entry consists of clipping of photo as it actually ran, along with cutline/caption. *Failure to include the cutlines/captions will result in disqualification.* Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include aptness of subject, human interest, apparent planning and execution, use of camera controls and lighting (as well as props where possible and appropriate), visual impact, story-telling ability, content/composition and technical quality. Color photos may be entered, but color WILL NOT be a factor in judging.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

FEATURE PHOTO (PD1 and PD2)

Definition: A feature photo differs from a news photo in that the photographer had some control of the setting and/or circumstances under which the photo was taken; may either illustrate a story or be used as a stand-alone. The photographer may have some control of the setting in which the photo is taken, but the photo may not be set up, unless it's a portrait. The photo should have good technical quality and include interesting light, compelling content and use of creative technique (blur, depth of field, panning, etc.), The photo should be timeless in nature, have universal appeal and human interest, and capture "the moment."

Class: Photo

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings. Entry consists of clipping of photo as it actually ran, along with cutline/caption. *Failure to include the cutlines/captions will result in disqualification.* Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include aptness of subject, human interest, apparent planning and execution, use of camera controls and lighting (as well as props where possible and appropriate), visual impact, story-telling ability, content/composition and technical quality. Color photos may be entered, but color WILL NOT be a factor in judging.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

SPORTS ACTION PHOTO (PK1 and PK2)

Definition: Any newsworthy photo taken of activity that occurs on the field of play. The photo should have good technical quality and include interesting lighting, compelling content or creative technique. May not include photos of post-game or sideline action. Set-up photos may not be entered.

Class: Photo

Entries: Two per college. Newspaper clippings. Entry consists of clipping of photo as it actually ran, along with cutline/caption. *Failure to include the cutlines/captions will result in disqualification.* Place entry label in the top right corner of 8.5- by 11-inch page (portrait view) to which entry is affixed.

Judging: Criteria for judging include capturing the peak of action during a key moment in the contest, newsworthiness, visual impact, story-telling ability, content/composition and technical quality. If peak of action involves a ball, then the ball should be visible in the photo. Color photos may be entered, but color WILL NOT be a factor in judging.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

PHOTO STORY-ESSAY (PG1 and PG2)

Definition: A grouping of three or more printed photos that visually tell a story and/or make a point without the help of an accompanying story. Any text block that runs with the photo story should be no more than 250 words. Double truck pages may be submitted as one entry. Page designs composed of a written story, as opposed to a text block, and accompanied by multiple photos should be entered in the inside page design or front page design contests. Online photos are not eligible to be entered into this category. Enter them in the Online Photo Story-Essay category instead.

Class: Photo

Entries: Two per college. Tear sheets. Submit entire tear sheet of page on which photos appear. Neatly cross out elements on the page that are not part of the entry. Place entry label in top right corner of tear sheet.

Judging: Criteria for judging include logical relationship of photos, clarity, story-telling ability, visual impact, content/composition, technical quality, and effectiveness of the combination of photos, words and layout in communicating the intended story. Color photos or spot color may be used, but color WILL NOT be a factor in judging.

Awards: Four places, plus honorable mentions.

JACC General Excellence Checklist for Newspapers

Mail-in contest

JUDGES:

Score each item on a five-point scale, with five (5) being the highest mark. Note that we ARE NOT asking for first place, second place, etc. All papers with total scores above a cutoff level will receive a general excellence award. There will be no honorable mentions. We value your input on what the cutoff level should be, but in general we look for an average of 70 percent (or a total score of about 87.5 points) on the 25 categories below (plus the one bonus category).

SCHOOL _____ **TOTAL SCORE** _____

COVERAGE AND CONTENT

_____ SCOPE OF SOURCES: Content comes from a variety of sources, including students, faculty, administrators, campus visitors, non-teaching staff, and community sources.

_____ BALANCE OF CONTENT: Content shows a variety and balance of on- and off-campus subject matter of relevance to the primary (student) audience.

_____ TIMELINESS: Content is timely consistent with the newspaper's frequency of publication, with stories of past events updated and "pre" stories covering a time span to the next scheduled issue.

_____ VITALITY OF CONTENT: Story length and placement reflect news values and stories develop information not likely already known to readers with details and fresh angles; "why" and "how" elements are included as needed.

_____ SPORTS COVERAGE: Sports news covers the range of sports, athletic, and recreational activities offered by the college, with coming events emphasized over past events; coverage includes features and one or more columns.

WRITING AND EDITING

_____ NEWS STORIES: Stories are well-written, with effective leads, complete and logical development, use of direct and indirect quotes, attribution as necessary, and avoidance of clichés, generalities, or wordiness; stories are fair, accurate, and balanced and free of the writer's opinion.

_____ DEPTH AND FEATURE STORIES: Depth and feature stories add to the readers' understanding of matters of current interest by utilizing leads that are colorful and interesting, complete and logical development, background paragraphs as needed; use of language is lively and effective; unless clearly labeled as opinion pieces, stories are free of editorializing.

_____ SPORTS STORIES: Sports stories utilize fresh leads that "update" stories; stories are factual with background information as needed, but avoid opinion; proper use of both direct and indirect quotes and adequate attribute is employed; stories avoid "boosterism;" profiles develop information beyond the obvious.

_____ COPY EDITING: Stories reflect consistent grammatical style (Associated Press or other) and are free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors; excess verbiage is absent and word choices are accurate; copy is free of typographical errors.

_____ HEADLINE WRITING AND PRESENTATION: Headlines use active voice and present tense to convey the point of the story with the appropriate choice of words; the potential for double meanings and "bad line breaks" are avoided; headlines fit without undue contrivance; feature headlines reflect the sense of their stories; teasers, kickers, or hammers are used effectively, and label headlines are absent.

OPINION CONTENT

_____ RANGE OF OPINION CONTENT: Opinion content appears in every issue, representing a range of opinions and subject matter, appropriately packaged, while avoiding "gossip."

_____ EDITORIAL WRITING: Editorials indicate adequate research and reporting and logically develop a single point of view or conclusion, offering solutions or calling for action, with effective, accurate use of language; editorials deal with subjects of reader concern.

_____ EDITORIAL CARTOONS: Written material in the cartoon is minimal, allowing the art to deliver the message; artwork shows care in preparation and uses artistic devices to enhance the cartoon; most cartoons illustrate accompanying written pieces, and stand-alone cartoons are clear and understandable.

_____ OPINION FEATURE WRITING (columns, opinion features, reviews, etc.): Effective leads arouse interest and reflect imaginative styles in stories logically developed with writing that is interesting and develops original reporting and observations; subject matter reflects the range of interests of readers.

_____ FORUM: There is evidence that the newspaper is regularly available to its readers as a public forum for expressions of opinion and information (EXAMPLES: guest opinion columns, letters to the editor sections, man-on-the-street type features)

DESIGN

_____ FRONT PAGE: Consistent design from issue to issue presents content significant to the audience in a well-designed package built around a focal point; balance between copy and graphic elements makes the page simple and easy to follow; design elements reflect relative news values of materials on the page; nameplate is clear and distinctive and includes appropriate folio information.

_____ OTHER NEWS, FEATURE, SPORTS PAGES: Each page has a focal point that dominates in layouts that separate and spotlight various pieces of content; text, headline, photo, and graphic elements are effectively used on the pages; related material is packaged; advertising is displayed effectively; each page contains appropriate folio information.

_____ OPINION PAGE OR SECTION: Editorials get important placement; material is displayed attractively and simply in a design that gives the opinion page(s) a distinctive appearance; graphic elements effectively contrast with type areas; a masthead provides publication data (and preferably staff names); advertising is omitted.

_____ HEADLINE SCHEDULE: A readable headline schedule with adequate variety of size and weight is effectively used to give the publication a consistent personality; spacing and fit of headlines is consistent and attractive; kickers, teasers, and hammers are used effectively; headlines are logically placed with text and hard-to-read arrangements are avoided; regular features carry fresh headlines each issue; special pages use effective headline variations.

_____ BODY TYPOGRAPHY: Body type is a readable face; bylines, photo credits, continuation lines, etc., are set apart from other text, and cutlines are distinguished from textual matter; "gray masses" are avoided or interrupted by typographic devices; smaller-than-body type is used infrequently, but purposefully.

_____ PRINTING QUALITY: Reproduction is clear and sharp, with ink distribution and impression pressure even throughout the publication; color -- if used -- is in register and true; publication is neatly folded and trimmed.

PHOTOGRAPHY, ART AND GRAPHICS

_____ PHOTO CONTENT: Photos have news value or are related to textual material, and all major feature stories are illustrated. Most photos emphasize people (as opposed to "things"), but crowd and "gang" shots are avoided; photos represent a variety of approaches through care and planning of compositional elements; photos are used large enough to be effective.

_____ PHOTO QUALITY: Photos are clear and sharp with contrast that is sufficient but not excessive; cropping that is consistent with the composition focuses on the essentials; photos are free of blemishes.

_____ CUTLINES: Cutlines explain the picture without excessive verbiage or statement of the obvious and identify by name and title all recognizable persons.

_____ ART AND GRAPHICS: Using special art and/or typographic devices, graphics are used to effectively develop and illustrate information without impairing effective page layout or readability; graphics are not overused.

BONUS

_____ LOCAL ADVERTISING (Bonus Points) Advertising content geared to the audience is built around active sales messages in designs that are clear and readable.